CLAIMS

1. A method for storing and distributing data in a network storage system having a plurality of devices interconnected with one or more switches, the method comprising the steps of:

writing, by one of the plurality of devices, a set of data to a memory associated with a port of one of the one or more switches, the memory being readable by all of the plurality of devices; and

reading, by one of the plurality of devices, the set of data from the memory.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of data further comprises:

an unique identification of one of the devices; and

an address of the one of the devices.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the unique identification of one of the devices further comprises a unique serial number of the device.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the address of one of the devices further comprises a fully qualified network address.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of data further comprises identification of one or more disks that are offline and inaccessible to any of the plurality of devices.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the identification further comprises a world wide name.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the identification further comprises a disk identification string, the disk identification string indicating a name of a switch, a port number on the switch, and a disk number.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the memory associated with a port further comprises a Symbolic Port Name field.

9. A network storage system comprising:

one or more switches having a plurality of ports, each switch having a memory associated with the port;

a plurality of file servers interconnected with the one or more switches;

a plurality of disks, each disk of the plurality of disks connected to at least one of the one or more switches; and

one of the plurality of file servers writing a set of data to the memory associated with one of the ports of one of the one or more switches.

10. The network storage system of claim 5, wherein the set of data further comprises:

a unique identification of one of the devices; and

an address of the one of the devices.

11. The network storage system of claim 9, wherein the unique identification of one of the devices further comprises an unique serial number.

12. The network storage system of claim 9, wherein the address further comprises a fully qualified network address.

13. A network storage system comprising:

one or more switches having a plurality of ports, each switch having a memory associated with the port;

a plurality of file servers interconnected with the one or more switches;

a plurality of disks, each disk of the plurality of disks connected to at least one of the one or more switches; and

one of the plurality of file servers, in response to one of the plurality of disks being offline, writing a identification information to one of the ports of one of the switches.

14. The network storage system of claim 13, wherein the plurality of switches comprise fibre channel switches operatively interconnected to define a switching fabric.

15. The network storage system of claim 13, wherein the memory associated with the port further comprises a Symbolic Port Name field.

16. A computer-readable medium, including program instructions executing on a file server, for storing and distributing data in a network storage system, the program instructions performing the steps of:

writing a set of data to a memory associated with a port of a switch, the memory being readable by all of a plurality of devices connected to the network storage system.